

Message Text

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INFO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 088791

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 1485 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
INFO RIO DE JANEIRO, USCINCEUR, CINCPAC 30 MAR 78

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1485

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

RIO DE JANEIRO FOR ASST SECY MOOSE

E.O. QQYTWC GDS

TAGS: PBOR, DJ, ET, SO

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL OUTLINES ETHIOPIAN POSITION
ON DJIBOUTI

REF: (A) ADDIS ABABA 1472 (NOTAL), (B) DJIBOUTI 442 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT: ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT (EPMG) APPEARS
FULLY COMMITTED TO PRESERVING AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI
WHICH IS NOT INIMICAL TO ETHIOPIA'S PERCEIVED VITAL IN-
TERESTS OF ACCESS TO DJIBOUTI'S PORT, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
WELFARE OF DJIBOUTIAN PEOPLE AND FORMER ECONOMIC AND TRADE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. FOREIGN MINISTRY
(MOFA) OFFICIAL EXPRESSED DEEP ETHIOPIAN CONCERN OVER POS-
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SIBILITY OF SOMALI SUBVERSION OF PRESENT DJIBOUTI GOVT
(GROD) FOR PURPOSE OF INSTALLING PUPPET REGIME THAT WILL
PUSH FOR EVENTUAL "UNION" WITH SOMALIA. OFFICIAL SAID
"ETHIOPIA COULD NOT REMAIN IDLE OR INDIFFERENT" TO
SUCH MOVES. JUDGING FROM OFFICIAL'S REMARKS, IT IS
PROBABLE THAT ETHIOPIA IS ALREADY TAKING PRECAUTION-
ARY MEASURES AGAINST POSSIBLE SOMALI ACTIONS THAT

WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT FORMER'S INTERESTS IN DJIBOUTI.
END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

1. AFTER READING DIPLOMATIC NOTE PROTESTING MARCH 25 MOFA ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US (REFTEL A), AMERICAS DIVISION HEAD BERHANE DERESSA LAUNCHED INTO LENGTHY EXPLANATION OF ETHIOPIAN POLICY TOWARD DJIBOUTI. HE SAID EPMG HAS GOOD REASON TO BE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL GROD DEVELOPMENTS. EPMG HAS RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT ARMED ELEMENTS OF SOMALI FORCES, HAVING BEEN DEFEATED IN OGADEN, HAVE ENTERED DJIBOUTI TERRITORY WITH AIM OF SUBVERTING PRESENT GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO ASSERTED THAT THE FRONT FOR LIBERATION OF SOMALI COAST (FLCS) WAS BEING ARMED BY SOMALIA AND BECOMING INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN DJIBOUTI. BERHANE CLAIMED SOMALI GOVT WAS PUTTING "TREMENDOUS" PRESSURE ON GROD TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO SOMALI DE-SIRESS(UNSPECIFIED). HE DAID THIS HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN EPMG-GROD RELATIONS BY GROD'S UNRESPONSIVENESS TO ETHIOPIAN EFFORTS TO PRESERVE DJIBOUTI STATE AS PRE-SENTLY CONSTITUTED.

2. BERHANE THEN PROJECTED SCENARIO FOR EVENTUAL SOMALI CONTROL OF TERRITORY, WHICH EPMG DID NOT WISH TO SEE OCCUR. SOMALI DEFEAT IN OGADEN HAS NOT RESULTED IN PUBLIC RENUNCIATION OF IRREDENTIST CLAIMS
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AGAINST NEIGHBORS AND THAT TO SAVE FACE WITHIN SOMALIA, REGIME WOULD NOW ATTEMPT TO ANNEX DJIBOUTI. SOMALIA HOPES TO ACCOMPLISH THIS BY SUPPORTING PRO-FOMALI FACTIONS WITHIN DJIBOUTI TO ENGINEER COUP D' ETAT, ESTABLISH SUPERFICIALLY LEGAL REGIME AND THEN FORM ARTIFICIAL UNION WITH SOMALIA. SUCH EFFORTS ON PART OF SOLALI GOVT WILL ONCE AGAIN THREATEN PEACE ON HORN, BERHAND SAID, BECAUSE EPMG WOULD NOT REMAIN IDLE OR INDIFFERENT TO ATTEMPTS AT TRANSFORMING GROD. ETHIOPIA DOES NOT SEE MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ITS INTERESTS IN OGADEN AND IN DJIBOUTI.

3. BERHANE STATED IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ETHIOPIA TO PRACTICE PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY TO FORESTALL ANDY RADICAL CHANGES OF GROD AND/OR POSSIBILITY OF HOSTILE GROD POSITION TOWARD ETHIOPIA DEVELOPING. HE DID NOT RULE OUT PREVENTIVE MILITARY OR PARA-MILITARY ACTIONS BY ETHIOPIAND WHEN HE REITERATED EPMG COULD NOT REMAIN IDLE. HE SAID ETHIOPIA HAD VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS AT STAKE IN DJIBOUTI, AS LISTED ABOVE, AND MUST PROTECT THEM. IF ETHIOPIAN PROJECTIONS ABOUT FUTURE OF DJIBOUTI WERE WRONG, EPMG WOULD BE HAPY TO BE PRO-

VEN WRONG, BUT HE IMPLIED HTAT IN INTERIM EPMG HAD TO
ACT ACCORDING TO ITS BEST-INFORMED PERCEPTIONS.
MATHERON
UNQUOTE VANCE

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